



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

June 10, 2016

H.R. 4979
Advanced Nuclear Technology Development Act of 2016

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce on May 18, 2016

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licenses and regulates the use of radioactive materials at civilian facilities, including nuclear reactors. Funding for that agency is provided in annual appropriation acts, and the agency is required to recover most of its funding through fees charged to licensees and applicants.

H.R. 4979 would direct the NRC to report to the Congress on existing federal activities related to testing and demonstrating advanced reactors with significant design improvements over existing commercial reactors. The bill also would require the NRC to submit to the Congress, within one year of enactment, a plan for establishing a framework for licensing such reactors. Finally, the bill would specify that any funding provided to the NRC prior to fiscal year 2021 to develop a regulatory framework for advanced reactors would be excluded from the portion of its budget that is offset by fees.

Based on information from the NRC about the historical costs of studies and reports similar to those required under H.R. 4979, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4979 would cost about \$1 million in 2017; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. That estimate does not include additional costs that the NRC might incur to develop a licensing framework for advanced reactors pursuant to the plan required under the bill, which CBO estimates could range between \$5 million and \$10 million annually over several years. The agency received no significant funding for such activities in 2016, and CBO has no basis for predicting whether funds will be provided in future years. Under current law, any such funding provided in future years would be largely offset by fees charged to the nuclear industry; under H.R. 4979, such amounts would be excluded from fee calculations through fiscal year 2021.

H.R. 4979 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 4979 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

H.R. 4979 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Megan Carroll. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.